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THE RELATIONSHIPS OF PROTESTANT MISSION BOARDS IN AMERICA TO THE
CHURCHES IN JAPAN, KOREA, CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY AND CONTROL FROM
AMERICA TO THE ORIENT

by

A. L. Warnshuis

Prepared at the request of the American Group of the
Institute of Pacific Relations, as one of a series
of papers aimed to supply a basis of fact and opinion
for the discussions at the 1927 Honolulu Conference.

PREFACE

This study is one of a series of monographs prepared in connection with the Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations at Honolulu in July 1927. These monographs are presented to the Institute on behalf of the American Group attending the Conference, but the presentation of this material for consideration in the program does not imply either that the Institute itself or that the American Group assumes responsibility for statements of fact or opinion contained in the texts. These remain as much the personal expression of the authors as would have been the case had the contributions been communicated orally. The Research Committee, which has charge of the editorial work of the American Group, has necessarily limited itself to the question of the pertinence of the subject matter to the discussions of the Institute.

In the discussions at the 1925 conference of the Institute missions emerged as a factor in Pacific relations. Were missions, especially Christian missions, to be regarded as an international asset, or an international irritant, or both? This question, repeatedly broached, had to be left in abeyance, but it was regarded as inescapably in the field for future discussion. The Institute at that time had not before it any adequate factual statement pertaining to missions which could be used as a basis for discussion.

Looking forward to the 1927 conference and, particularly, the 1929 conference of the Institute, the American Group asked its Sub-committee on Missions (Charles H. Fahs, Mary E. Woolley, Edward H. Hume and Daniel J. Fleming) to draft an outline for a major study of the social results of Christian missions in China. The Committee responded to the request and submitted a draft which was accepted by the Research and Executive Committees of the American Group on December 11th, 1926, with the understanding that the project be submitted to the Social Science Research Council.

This draft drew attention to the fact that all former major efforts to evaluate the social results of missions had had these limitations: (1) They had been offered by those committed to missions and usually as an apology for missions, and (2) they had sought to analyze the specific social results of missions without initiating a general study for each area investigated of the total forces making for social change. Thus they were unable to give to missions in each case their appropriate places and setting as discovered through processes that were inclusive, detached and completely objective. The American Group was on the point of forwarding this draft to the Social Science Research Council when Mr. Charles H. Fahs, the Chairman of the Missions Sub-committee, urged that the American Group postpone action on this research project until it could be discussed mutually by the Chinese and Americans attending the 1927 Conference at Honolulu. Mr. Fahs and the members of his committee felt that the Chinese members of the Institute should be asked whether they would welcome some such study and if their answer should be in the affirmative, steps should be taken by a joint committee of Chinese and Americans to

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re-draft the outline so that the project, if eventually undertaken, should be directed by an internationally constituted group and serve equally the purposes of the Chinese and American members of the Institute. The Committee of the American Group decided to act on Mr. Fahs' proposal and defer action until full conference with the Chinese had taken place in Honolulu.

In the meantime, members of the American Group, remembering the lack of a factual basis for the discussion of missions at the first Honolulu Conference, urged that short reports be prepared on the following topics:

1. The extent and nature of the work of Christian missions in the Pacific countries;
2. The relationships of Protestant mission boards in America to the churches in Japan, Korea, China and the Philippine Islands, with special reference to the transfer of authority and control from America to the Orient.
3. A compilation of the most widely current and responsible criticisms of the missionary movement as voiced both in the Orient and the Occident.

The preparation of the first report has been undertaken by Dr. Harlan P. Beach. The preparation of the third has not been undertaken because it has not been possible, as yet, to secure the services of a suitable author. On May 18th, 1927, Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, Secretary of the International Missionary Council, was asked to prepare a short paper on the second topic, namely, the transfer of the authority and control from the Protestant Mission Boards in America to the churches in Japan, Korea, China and the Philippine Islands. This paper is now offered in this preliminary form as a part of the data necessary for the discussions at Honolulu. Its contents have been checked as carefully as possible in the time available, but Dr. Warnshuis will be grateful for the correction of any inaccuracies which a wider circle of readers may detect.

American Group
Institute of Pacific Relations
129 East 52nd Street
New York City.

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF PROTESTANT MISSION BOARDS IN AMERICA TO THE CHURCHES
IN JAPAN, KOREA, CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

The general aim of the missionary work of the Christian Churches has been defined in many statements. For the limited purpose of this paper, it will be sufficient to quote from one of these statements which represents one of the largest missionary organizations. The "Manual" of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. expresses this purpose as including the aim "to gather these disciples into Christian churches which shall be self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing; to co-operate, so long as necessary, with these churches in the evangelizing of their countrymen, and in bringing to bear on all human life the spirit and principles of Christ." Again in the same "Manual", (section 87), the relations with the Churches abroad are stated as follows:-

"National consciousness should be welcomed and recognized by provision for the absolute independence of the Church on the Field, with complete ecclesiastical authority, and responsibility for the administration of its own affairs".

These statements may be accepted as expressing generally the aim of the foreign missionary work of all the Protestant Churches. Probably only the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal Churches would desire to make plain that the "National" Churches are integral parts of a world-wide Church, but without infringing upon the rights and powers of each part to administer its own affairs. In the Methodist Church, all the "area conferences" are represented directly by delegates in the quadrennial "General Conference" and in the Protestant Episcopal Church the American Bishops in the various missions are members of the House of Bishops in America and subject to its jurisdiction.

AUTONOMOUS CHURCHES

Brief mention of the Churches that have grown out of the missionary work of some of the larger denominations in the West will show that the general aim stated above has been carried into effect in Japan, Korea, China and the Philippine Islands, as well as in other parts of the world.

Congregational - The churches that have a congregational polity have naturally established independent congregations in the fields to which their missionaries have gone. This is true, among others, of the missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Baptist Missionary Society, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the London Missionary Society. Outstanding examples of such a policy are the "Kumiai" churches in Japan, and the churches related to these societies in China and the Philippine Islands.

Presbyterian. All of the churches in Japan, Korea, China and the Philippine Islands that have grown out of the missionary work of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, England, Scotland, Ireland are now wholly independent in their government of the older churches from whose work they have sprung.

In Japan, all these Presbyterian churches have united to form "The Church of Christ in Japan". Only self-supporting congregations are admitted to full membership in its presbyteries. The churches still receiving aid from the missions have an affiliated membership, which becomes full membership as soon as they attain financial independence. The American missionaries may become members of the Japanese churches, the ordained ministers of its presbyteries by bringing letters of dismissal from the church in America. The missions cooperating with this church are those of

the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches in the U. S. A., the Reformed Church in America, and the Reformed Church in the United States.

The Presbyterian Church in Korea includes the work of both the Northern and the Southern Presbyterian Churches in the United States, the United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church of Australia. This Church is entirely independent of the churches that send missionaries to Korea. "The Church is the central agency in control of all ecclesiastical affairs and administering also all the schools and all the evangelistic work which it supports. The ordained missionaries are all members of the presbyteries and responsible to them for their assignment and work on the same basis with the Korean pastors of self-supporting churches who are also in charge of country fields. All evangelistic and primary school work is supported by the Korean Church, so there has been no question as to the transfer to the Church of the administration of foreign funds. The funds which it administers are its own." *

In China, we have an example of a church, presbyterian in its form of government, that has been autonomous from its beginning. This is the Protestant Church in South Fukien. As soon as local congregations were organized, these were immediately set up independent of the Churches in America and England that cooperated with them, and so they have continued as they have developed a church organization with several presbyteries and a synod, in which all the churches in that area are united, without bringing over or even translating a creed or rules of government of any church in the West. With this independent church, the missions of the Reformed Church in America, the

*Speer, Mr. Robert E., and Dr. Hugh T. Kerr. Report on Japan and China of the Deputation sent by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. 1926, p. 68.

Presbyterian Church in England, and the London Missionary Society now co-operate.

For a time some of the other Presbyterian Churches in China were organized in presbyteries that were organically related to the parent Churches in America, but now all the Presbyterian Churches in China are independent of foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This has been so for a number of years. These churches are now engaged in the process of organizing a nationwide church to be known as "The Church of Christ in China." In this development they are already organized in presbyteries and conferences, related to one another in various ways. The Divisional Council in Kwangtung is already organized, comprising the churches formerly related to the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the United Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, the London Missionary Society and the United Brethren. The South Fukien Churches will probably be another divisional council of this church. The presbyteries in Central and North China will also probably enter the same Church. These include churches formerly related to both the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches in the U. S. A., the United Church in Canada, and the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and Ireland. The conferences of the churches formerly related to the London Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions have shared in the negotiations leading up to the organizations of this Church, and it is hoped that they also will enter into it. This movement for the purposes of uniting all these churches is a demonstration of their independence, for the decisions regarding these proposals are made by the Chinese Churches without any reference to the Churches from which the foreign missionaries have come.

Methodist. The Methodist Church in Japan has been organized as an independent body, wholly autonomous. The missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), and of the United Church in

Canada cooperate with it.

In Korea, China, and the Philippine Islands, the Churches are members of "conferences" that are on an equality with the "conferences" of the churches in America. The missionaries are members of the "conferences", and there is no racial or other distinction in the "conferences" between the missionaries and the members who are nationals of the countries in which they are located. The "conferences" send delegates to the Quadrennial General Conferences of the Churches in the same way as the "conferences" in America and other lands. In these churches there is no organization known as a "mission", but there are finance committees which administer the funds contributed by the foreign missionary boards in America. On these committees in the areas where the work is older, there are members who are nationals. The "conferences" of the Methodist Episcopal Church are united in a "Far Eastern Conference".

Anglican. In all the countries included in this survey, the Churches of the Anglican Communion are organized in national churches with diocesan councils and Synods that are independent and autonomous. The missionaries of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, the Church of England in Canada, and the Church of England cooperate in the work of these churches. The American bishops are members of the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, but they are chosen in accordance with the laws of the national churches. In Japan two Japanese Bishops and in China one Chinese Assistant Bishop have been consecrated.

Lutheran. In China, an independent, autonomous Lutheran Church has been organized, which includes the churches of almost all the American Lutheran Missions.

Within the limits of this paper it is not possible, and it is probably unnecessary to review the status of the other church organizations. Those mentioned above are the largest and oldest churches. From the brief statement of facts given above, it should be entirely clear that the development

of ecclesiastical organization and the growth of the Christian churches in all these lands has resulted in the complete transfer to these national churches of all ecclesiastical government and the independent control by themselves of all their own ecclesiastical affairs. The adoption of creedal statements, the ordination of their clergy, the admission and discipline of members, the question of union with other churches, and all other church matters are wholly within the governing authority of these national churches in accordance with the constitution and character of the polity of each communion.

III. Transfer of Authority.

To complete this statement it is necessary to go farther and to show to what extent the Boards and Missions have transferred to these autonomous churches the work and institutions which they aid or maintain. A definition of terms will probably help to make the following discussion clear. In speaking of the "Church", the reference is to the ecclesiastical body, the denomination or the local congregation composed almost entirely of the converts and adherents from among the people of these countries. The churches in the West have organized "Boards" to administer their missionary work under the authority and control of the supreme courts or governing bodies of these churches. "Societies" are organizations composed of church members voluntarily associating themselves for the purpose of prosecuting missionary work in other lands. These "Boards" and "Societies" have organized their missionaries in the various countries or regions in which they are located as "missions", or "mission councils", or "district committees". These terms are synonymous, and in this paper both in the preceding pages or in those that follow, the term "mission" is used to designate these organizations in the field composed, almost without exception, of the missionaries from abroad who are related to the work of a Board or Society in a given area.

A large variety of plans have been adopted for the administration of financial assistance and to govern the relations of foreign missionaries to

the churches. These plans depend to a large extent upon the stage of development of younger churches. The age of the work is a fact which must always be taken into account in considering these various plans and especially when comparing the plans effective in different areas. How an older, stronger church may most effectively aid a younger church has always been and is in all places a difficult and delicate question. The question and the different plans or methods adopted in the attempt to answer it can be discussed here in only very general terms.

In the first place, it should be clearly understood that the churches in the West and their missionary boards have generally transferred legislative authority regarding the administration of work in the field to the "missions", as defined above. It is almost a universal rule in all missionary administration that the initiation of policies and action rests with the mission. The appropriation of money is made in lump sums to the mission, which is responsible for its distribution in the various forms of work aided by it. Missionaries are generally appointed to the mission and their assignment to stations and particular fields of work is determined not in New York but by the mission. The apparent exceptions to this are only those cases in which the mission has asked for some specialist, but even so the Board in America is only the recruiting agency that finds the person for the task defined by the mission. It is seldom and almost never that the Boards in America act in the administration of missionary work abroad excepting upon the recommendation of the mission.

The question therefore resolves itself into that of the relation of the Mission to the Church. The church, as shown above, is entirely in control of its own affairs, with full spiritual sovereignty and ecclesiastical autonomy. It is the desire and purpose of the missions that the Church would of itself take up its true character and undertake its full work. The problem that exists concerns the manner and method by which the mission gives its aid to the Church. How can the help of the mission best be given in the interest of the Church

herself and of the progress of Christianity in each country? This question refers not only to financial aid but also to the services of the missionaries.

Many earnest efforts have been made to answer this question. The range of these various plans extends from those in which the mission is merged with the Church to those in which there is complete separation between these two bodies. Where the plans provide for the distinct and separate existence and action of the mission, the mission is in effect a committee of the Board, acting for it with the authority conferred upon it by the Board. This plan is an application of the principle of transferring administrative authority from the Boards in the West to the field, bringing it as close as possible to the work administered. In the plans by which the mission is merged in the church, this policy has been adopted in response to the desire of the church to have direct relations with and access to the Boards in the West, eliminating the mission and its mediation in receiving the financial aid and the services of the missionaries given to it by the western churches. Where the mission is strong the Board in New York or London exercises little direct control of field administration; where the mission is merged in the church, the Board is necessarily called upon to act directly upon the requests of the church. Between these two, there are numberless other plans for cooperation or affiliation. Most of them recognize that the mission is a temporary agency and that inevitably it must disappear as the Church assumes full responsibility for the maintenance and development of all Christian work in the area within its influence. In all of these plans, the continuation of financial aid and missionary service for an indefinite period is assumed, and the questions under discussion have to do with the issue of whether or not the missionaries working with and in the church shall exercise on behalf of the Board sending them the control in whole or in part of the money given by the Board for the work of the church. Many missionary conferences have been held to discuss the merits of these many different plans, and there is available a shelf of books that deal with the question. Obviously this state-

ment can not profitably discuss this question. It may suffice to quote from a report of a conference held in Shanghai in January 1926, as follows: "Within the body of the Church, in all problems of the Church's faith and order, its government, finances, and propagation, Chinese initiative should have entirely free course, and that the Chinese should work realizing that in the sight of God the ultimate responsibility as also the spiritual and formal authority is theirs and theirs alone". The recognition of that principle by the churches and missions in Japan, Korea, China, Philippine Islands, and elsewhere, translated into practice, means that the churches may accept what help they desire from without and they may enter into what cooperation they please, and they follow their own initiative or independent paths or accept leadership as self-dependent and self-determining churches. The autonomy of the churches, as stated in the preceding section of this paper is unimpaired as they receive or decline the aid of the mission. The problem of the mission is to relate their financial aid and the services of their missionaries to the churches in such a way as will recognize the rightful position of the churches and will contribute most effectively to the strengthening of the churches, their expansion into hitherto unoccupied areas and influencing all human life and activity with the spirit and principles of Christ.

The success of these various plans in their practical working varies greatly in different places, depending upon the age of the work, as stated above, the resulting ability of the church to carry its responsibilities, and also upon the point of view both of the older church with its missions, and of the younger church. The polity of the church denomination is also, a modifying factor, - in some the ecclesiastical organization is such as to make it easy to give large freedom to small, local units, in others the connectional organic unity of the whole body resulting in the subordination of local units and their leaders to higher church authorities. These and other facts need to be kept in mind when discussing any particular plan or situation.

Most important of all are the personal relations involved; The character and attitude of the cooperating parties, both the leaders of the churches and the missionaries from other lands, is more important than the plans of cooperation. This is emphasized in the report of Dr. Robert E. Speer on his recent visit to China, from which the following extract is quoted:- "The fact is that neither in wise plans of cooperation, nor in self support is the sole solution to be found, essential as these are. It is in personal temper and attitudes also. All relations are ultimately personal and the fundamental and ultimate thing is the love that is stronger than death and that many waters cannot quench, neither the waters of foreignism nor the waters of anti-foreignism, nor of nationalism, whether Chinese or Western, whether false or true.

"The Rev. Liu Fu T'ien of Ichowfu used a homely but conclusive illustration at the Tsinanfu Conference: 'In the conference of Chinese leaders in Shantung, we were more concerned with the renewing of the spirit of cooperation than with securing an organization. To illustrate my point - on the way to Tsinan I saw two wheelbarrows; one was pulled and pushed by brothers, the other was operated by an employer and employee. Outwardly they were handled in the same way, but there was a vast difference in the efficiency of the two pairs, because of the spirit of cooperation between the brothers, who were pushing and pulling together, while the other two utterly lacking in that spirit were each yelling at the other to pull harder, each was suspicious the one was trying to make the other do all the work.'

"The essential thing is not that the Church and Missions should both be together at one end of the barrow, still less that they should be coalesced into one barrow man who would have to be located at one end, either before or after, but that they should be working together as brothers in the spirit and relations which enable both to do their utmost at the common task and each to fulfill his own distinct share in it."*

*Speer, Mr. Robert E. and Dr. Hugh T. Kerr. Report on Japan and China.....1926, p. 324.

IV. EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL WORK.

Something more may need to be said regarding the relation of the schools, colleges, universities and hospitals to the Churches. The principles outlined above are naturally applicable to the administration of these institutions. However, the greater wealth of the older churches in the West has enabled the Mission to establish and maintain educational, medical, and other institutions that in size and character and cost are much greater than the younger churches are as yet able to support, and yet which are essential to meet the demands for the spread of Christianity in non-Christian countries. These institutions are conducted in the name of the Churches but in reality they are controlled and developed by the Missions. It is commonly stated that the Churches are expected some day to take over and carry on all this work. To a large extent, it is evident that the Churches are being compromised and their future is being shaped and determined for them. There are many who see this and who recognize both the evil and also the good of it. They know that the younger Churches as Churches cannot yet do these things. They have as yet neither the financial ability nor a sufficient number of leaders capable of accepting the administrative responsibilities. Nobody would say that these things should not be done. It would be unreasonable to suggest that the development of such institutions should be retarded to correspond with the growth of the Churches. Moreover, the responsibilities of the Churches in the West are not to be limited by the lack of strength of the younger Churches in the East. The older Churches must be urged to do all within their power, which they are not yet doing, for the benefit of men and women everywhere. Only in establishing and developing this institutional work, it is essential that the younger Churches should be protected and prepared to take over these tasks in due time or be free

to develop their own institutions in their own way. Moreover, it is important that these institutions conducted by foreign agencies should be rightly related to the cultural life of the nations so that they may be incorporated in it. Although supported by foreign funds and served by foreign workers, they must not be alien institutions, but should be thoroughly naturalized so as to contribute to the fullest possible measure to the development of the native culture and national life.

How far are these principles recognized and applied in the existing institutions? In elementary schools, so far as these still receive support from foreign sources, the control has been very largely transferred to the governing bodies of the Churches. The problem of the relationships of these schools may still exist in some places, but it is not acute or far from complete and satisfactory solution. The difficulties that exist, and they do exist, are in the support and control of the colleges and universities and larger hospitals.

There is no disposition on the part of the responsible boards to dispute the right of each nation to have its own national, adequate and complete educational system, and to control and direct the educational forces which shape the national mind and character. The Missions desire only to provide a comparatively small and supplementary portion of the immense development of schools of all kinds which are needed in the countries in which they are at work. Their schools and the organizations that control them must be brought into just relationship to the institutions and authority of each country. The schools should be registered, if that is required, and they should comply with all regulations. They must either obey the laws or come away. The questions of whether these different national governments will permit private schools to exist, and whether religious teaching may be an integral part of the training given in such schools are to be determined by these governments. Japan and the United States of America have adopted such policies, and we must believe that China will also do what is right and reasonable.

The problem of control and administrative relationships will also yield to patient and wise effort. An increasing measure of power is being given to Boards of Managers in the countries in which the institutions are located, and the constitution of those Boards are being altered so that a majority of the members will be nationals of those countries. As rapidly as qualified men and women can be found, the positions of presidents, deans, and other administrative responsibility are being given to nationals. Much progress is being made along right lines in these respects; probably such steps should have been taken at an earlier stage in many cases, but in any case the fact should be recognized that it is now being achieved. The title to the property of these institutions is held almost altogether by the Boards in America or Europe in accordance with the laws of the countries in which they are located. No serious issue need arise with reference to these titles, for it has been shown that wherever desirable and practicable it is easily possible to lease them at nominal rates to the controlling bodies in Asia.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the questions of control and administration of missionary work are those that must be solved on the field. The missionary boards in New York or London, or wherever their headquarters may be located in America or Europe, long ago decided to transfer control and full responsibility for all administration to the missions and churches in Asia. The practical problems center around the duty of discovering the Christian leaders in Asia who will "assume the real responsibility, not for giving counsel only but for accepting consequences and for actually carrying the load and maintaining the trust".*

*Speer, Mr. Robert E. and Dr. Hugh T. Kerr. Report on Japan and China....1926, p. 403.